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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 40th MEETING

Chairman: Mr. SENGWE (Zimbabwe)

Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. MSELLE

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The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 124: FINANCING OF THE UNITED NATIONS ANGOLA VERIFICATION MISSION (A/51/494 and Add.1-2 and A/51/700 and Corr.1)

1. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM III) contained in document A/51/494 and Add.1-2, said that the addenda had been necessary because the information contained in the first report, dated 14 October 1996, had been overtaken by events. The cost estimate for the period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997 had been revised downward to $314,738,000 gross to take account of the expected reduction in troop strength by the end of December 1996 and delays in the implementation of some activities, including infrastructure repairs and mine-clearing programmes.

2. The action to be taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-first session in connection with the financing of UNAVEM III was a decision to credit Member States the unencumbered balance of $20,790,900 gross for the period from 9 February to 31 December 1995, the appropriation of the amount of $152,716,400 gross for the maintenance of the Mission for the 12-month period from 1 July 1996 to 30 June 1997, and the assessment of the amount of $152,716,400 gross at a monthly rate of $25,452,733 gross, beginning 1 January 1997, should the Security Council decide to extend the mandate of UNAVEM III beyond 11 December 1996.

3. In the absence of the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, he wished to draw attention to the Advisory Committee's recommendations for additional appropriations contained in paragraph 30 of its report (A/51/700 and Corr.1).

AGENDA ITEM 116: PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1996-1997 (continued)

Elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa

Programme budget implications of the draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption by the Second Committee in its report (A/51/605/Add.1) (A/C.5/51/39)

4. Mr. TAKASU (Controller), introducing the statement submitted by the Secretary-General on the programme budget implications of the draft resolution on the elaboration of an International Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (A/C.5/51/39), said that no additional appropriations would be needed to meet the requirements contained in the text of the draft resolution.

5. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should inform the General Assembly that, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution recommended by the Second Committee in its report (A/51/605/Add.1) concerning the elaboration of an

International Convention to Combat Desertification, particularly in Africa, no additional appropriation would be necessary.

6. It was so decided.

International action to combat drug abuse and illicit production and trafficking (continued)

Programme budget implications of the draft resolution recommended to the General Assembly for adoption by the Third Committee in its report (A/51/611) (continued) (A/C.5/51/36)

7. Mr. HALBWACHS (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) referred to the conference room paper containing an analysis of the resources in the programme budget implications which had been circulated to members. The breakdown showed that the total financial implications of the draft resolution had initially been $976,500. However, if the provisions for the six expert group meetings were removed, as proposed by Mexico, the total cost would fall to $522,000. Of that amount, $212,600 would be absorbed within the regular budget, $87,300 would be funded from extrabudgetary resources and the balance of $222,100 would be financed under the provisions of the contingency fund.

8. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that she was puzzled by the discrepancy between the figure given for the cost of the expert group meetings in the statement submitted by the Secretary-General ($529,500) and the figure stated in the conference room paper ($454,500), and would welcome an explanation. She wished to point out, moreover, that there was no legislative basis for the holding of expert group meetings in 1997 and 1998.

9. Mr. HALBWACHS (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget division) said that the figure of $529,500 had been obtained by adding the cost of the open-ended working group on demand reduction ($75,000) to the $454,500 that had been given as the cost of the expert group meetings. It could not be assumed that Member States which had been willing to contribute to the cost of the expert group meetings would be equally prepared to pay for other activities related to the special session. The amount that had been expected from those States therefore had to be removed from the Secretariat's estimates for the programme budget implications of the draft resolution.

10. The CHAIRMAN proposed that the Committee should adopt the following draft decision: "Should the General Assembly decide to adopt the draft resolution contained in the report of the Third Committee (A/51/611), additional requirements of $522,000 would arise under section 14, International drug control, of the programme budget. Of that amount, $212,600 could be met from the redeployment of existing budgetary resources and $87,300 from extrabudgetary resources. The balance of $222,100 would be subject to the guidelines for the use and operation of the contingency fund."

11. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that, while she did not object to the draft text which the Chairman had just read out, an additional sentence should be inserted to make it clear that there was no legislative basis for the convening of expert group meetings in 1997 and 1998.

12. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) said that he had some concerns about how some of the required resources would be financed from extrabudgetary funds. It might be useful to hear the views of the Advisory Committee before the Committee took any action on the matter.

13. The CHAIRMAN said that the Chairman of the Advisory Committee was currently chairing a meeting of that Committee and it would therefore be difficult to follow up on the suggestion made by the United States representative.

14. Mr. IRAGORRI (Colombia) said that he shared the concerns of the United States delegation about the reliance on extrabudgetary resources. It was difficult to understand why the States to which the Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division had referred would not be similarly willing to contribute to other activities that would help prepare for the special session of the General Assembly.

15. Mr. HALBWACHS (Director of the Programme Planning and Budget Division) said that, should the Committee decide that there would be no expert group meetings, the Secretariat could not assume that the Member States which had been willing to finance those meetings would be equally willing to fund other activities.

16. Ms. PEÑA (Mexico) said that, in its decision, the Committee should request that the General Assembly take into account the fact that there was no provision in the draft resolution for the convening of the expert group meetings.

17. Mr. KELLER (United States of America) said that he supported the amendment proposed by the representative of Mexico. He further proposed the insertion of language to the effect that every effort would be made to obtain the additional extrabudgetary resources originally envisaged, thereby reducing the need for regular budget resources.

18. Ms. BUERGO (Cuba) said that, while she could support the proposal to seek the maximum extrabudgetary resources to finance the activity, such resources were not guaranteed. It must therefore be made very clear that the activity would be financed from the regular budget while every possible effort would be made to obtain extrabudgetary resources.

19. The CHAIRMAN said that, on the basis of the suggestions just received, he would revise the draft decision which he had earlier read out by adding the words: "In addition, every effort would be made to obtain extrabudgetary resources to finance these activities".

20. The draft decision, as orally revised, was adopted.

The meeting rose at 4.10 p.m.